

TORONTO PUBLIC SERVICE

People Plan

2008-2011

Learning Strategy

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Context	1
Purpose	1
Current state	1
Rationale for a New Comprehensive Toronto Public Service Learning Strategy	4
Moving Forward	5
Accountability and Responsibility	9
Recommendations	10

CONTEXT

The Toronto Public Service People Plan includes the goal that “we will be a learning organization” and it includes four objectives:

1. Increase support for divisional learning activities and corporate learning programs
2. Corporate learning policies and programs support employee training and development
3. Ensure employees feel valued, recognized and connected to the organization
4. All supervisors understand and apply key legislation and policies

This Learning Strategy provides the background to those objectives and describes the vision, roles and investments required to achieve them.

A Learning Strategy was first developed and approved in 2007 by the Toronto Public Service Workforce Strategy Team Learning Strategy Sub-Committee. The scope of that Learning Strategy has been expanded to address the following recommendation of the February 2008 Blueprint for Fiscal Stability and Economic Prosperity report from the Mayor’s Fiscal Review Panel:

“The City should develop a strategy for systematic and comprehensive staff training and education, including more internal resources for on-the-job training and retraining, as well as joint training initiatives with City unions.”

PURPOSE

The Learning Strategy described here is a first step towards a systematic and comprehensive plan for training and developing the Toronto Public Service. It is a multi-year strategy to address the chronic under-investment in training and development that has existed since amalgamation. The Toronto Public Service Learning Strategy is based on clear principles and accountabilities and will require a measured and steady increase in funding to support divisional and corporate plans.

CURRENT STATE

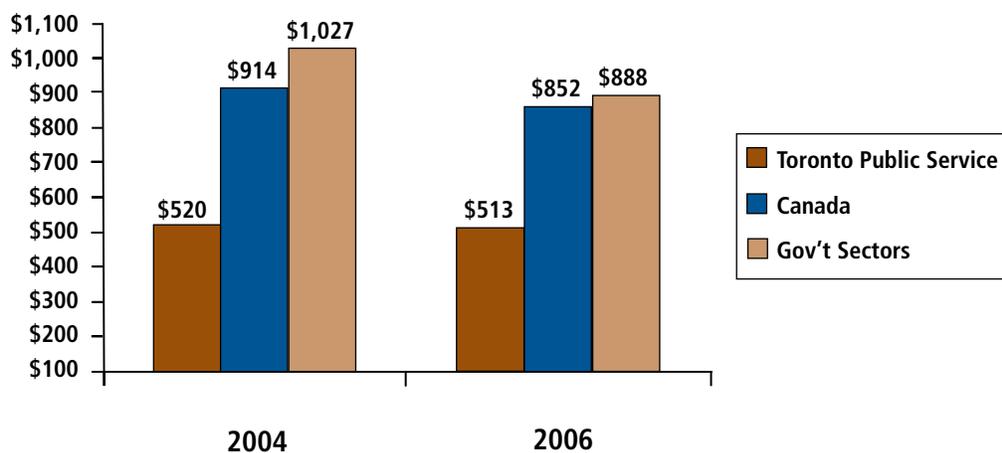
In the 10 years since amalgamation, financial pressures have led to a steady decline in the investment in employee training and development.

1. Based on external benchmarks, the City of Toronto chronically under-funds staff training and development

Best practice research has demonstrated that investment in staff training and development is an essential part of maintaining a productive workforce capable of adapting to new technology and changing public needs. The Conference Board of Canada provides benchmarking data to which the City's investments can be compared.

Training Expenditure per Employee (2004-2006)

Toronto Public Service investment falls dramatically short on average training expenditure per employee in Canada and across government sectors.



*Source: The Conference Board of Canada Learning & Development Outlook 2007

2. There are long wait lists for attendance in corporate courses

Spaces in the Courses for the Toronto Public Service calendar quickly fill. Wait lists are long. Between January 2006 and April 2007, 1,716 employees were wait listed for courses at the Toronto Public Service Learning Centre.

3. There has been a steady reduction of support for both divisional and corporate learning

In the past there was considerable support for employee development. The following is an overview of programs that have been cut since amalgamation. New funds should not simply replace programs that were cancelled but understanding what was done in the past should help create new, more effective strategies for the future.

Re-training Fund

This \$5 million fund was available to support teams or individuals develop new skills that were deemed essential as a direct result of amalgamation's need to harmonize groups of staff coming together from different municipalities with varying standards of practice, differing skill levels and upgrading to a baseline skill set. It supported new skills required because of restructuring to meet new service expectations and develop a flexible workforce. This fund was eliminated in 2002.

Intact Team Learning Funding

One cost effective and high impact way of learning is to have a whole work group attend training together as an intact team. From 2001 to 2003, all intact team training sessions on core competencies such as effective report writing were corporately funded. This allowed divisions to use their training budgets for technical training specific to their division. In 2004, corporate funding for intact team learning ended.

Organization Effectiveness/Organization Development Staff

Getting the best return on training dollars requires accurate assessment of needs and oversight about how funds are used. In the past in-house capacity was provided by Organizational Development consultants who developed divisional learning plans and who designed and delivered courses requiring a consistent approach across the organization. In 2000, 18 Organization Effectiveness consultants worked at a corporate level and were assigned to divisions. Currently, there are nine Organization Development consultants in the Human Resources Division. These reductions have increased the reliance on external consultants, eliminated the capacity to develop an enterprise-wide needs assessment and reduced oversight of the administration of training funds.

Career Development Services

Career Development Services helped employees plan their careers, prepare for job competitions and link organizational needs with individual career aspirations. In 2004 all five positions in career, training, staff development and succession related roles were eliminated.

Extraordinary Learning Opportunities Fund

This fund supported special learning events and activities not provided within the City that could have had an impact on a (then) department or the City as a whole. This fund was used for focused investment in key staff who for example, were given responsibility for a new program area or required an educational opportunity with succession planning goals in mind. The Extraordinary Learning Opportunities Fund was eliminated in 2003.

Corporate Funding for the Diploma in Public Administration program

In the fall of 2007, corporate funding for the Diploma in Public Administration program was eliminated. Participants and divisions are now responsible for all costs including tuition and books.

The cumulative impact of the reduction in investment

These trends are particularly troublesome as the City of Toronto competes to attract new talent to replace the anticipated retirements of the baby boom generation. New employees expect ongoing learning and development opportunities. Learning and development should be one of the ways in which the City of Toronto develops employee loyalty and corporate culture. New employees are expected to learn about new technologies, legislation and procedures and the Toronto Public Service mission, values and ethics.

RATIONALE FOR A NEW COMPREHENSIVE TORONTO PUBLIC SERVICE LEARNING STRATEGY

The Learning Strategy should prepare us for what lies ahead

The environmental scan included in the Toronto Public Service People Plan describes several trends that will dramatically affect the City including the volume of retirements and the competition for skilled workers. The chronic under-funding of training and development reduces our capacity to deal with those challenges.

Because our financial and people resources are limited, we have focused on training - giving people the skills to do their current job. We have not been investing in developing people for their future jobs. This means we are not well prepared to do succession management.

In order to be a flexible and adaptable organization we need to anticipate the changing needs of the public and equip people with the skills to respond in innovative and cost effective ways to meet those needs.

The employee perspective on learning

City staff are deeply committed to public service. Many will spend many years with the City. Their pride and commitment to public service excellence is increased when they have the skills, knowledge and feedback needed to continuously improve. Opportunities to grow and develop improve morale, increase commitment and help people adapt to new technology or changes in the workplace. When employees are given time to develop and can see opportunities for movement and change, they are more likely to stay with the City. In addition, research has shown that employees' attitudes about their job and employer have a direct affect on how well they provide service.

The employer perspective on learning

The members of the Toronto Public Service are its greatest resource. Investing in employee development helps the workforce to adapt to the changing needs of the public and encourages innovation and improvement. It is easier to recruit and retain people in an organization that has a variety of opportunities for growth and development. Learning is a key ingredient in successful implementation of new programs and services.

The benefits of investing in learning

The benefits of investing in employee development are well documented and wide-ranging. A comprehensive strategy:

- makes the City more attractive as an employer in a competitive job market
- increases the diversity of the City's pool of qualified managers, directors and senior professionals
- reduces spending on direct recruitment and advertising costs for senior management positions (\$700,000 over the next five years)
- increases public confidence in the City's ability to maintain a knowledgeable and competent workforce
- reduces our risk and exposure to liability due to non-compliance or inconsistent employee training, for example, health and safety legislation
- improves employee engagement, career growth and development

MOVING FORWARD

Principles for a comprehensive and systematic Toronto Public Service Learning Strategy

The Toronto Public Service is a large and complex organization and achieving a truly comprehensive strategy will take time. The strategy must address:

- all levels of the organization
- all divisions of the organization
- all types of skills/competencies
- learning that is both formal (structured programs) and informal (opportunities at work or after work)
- training for current jobs and opportunities to develop for future positions
- corporate priorities and core work skills and knowledge needed across the work force
- a commitment to building a strong public service through continuous growth and life long learning

To be a comprehensive strategy, a number of significant changes in how we approach learning and development are required:

- A fundamental shift in thinking at the organizational and individual levels so that learning is seen and valued as a business imperative
- A commitment of resources and staff time, and commitment to new innovative methods to learning
- Dedicated funding necessary to build and sustain a learning culture

We must also clearly communicate our beliefs about learning:

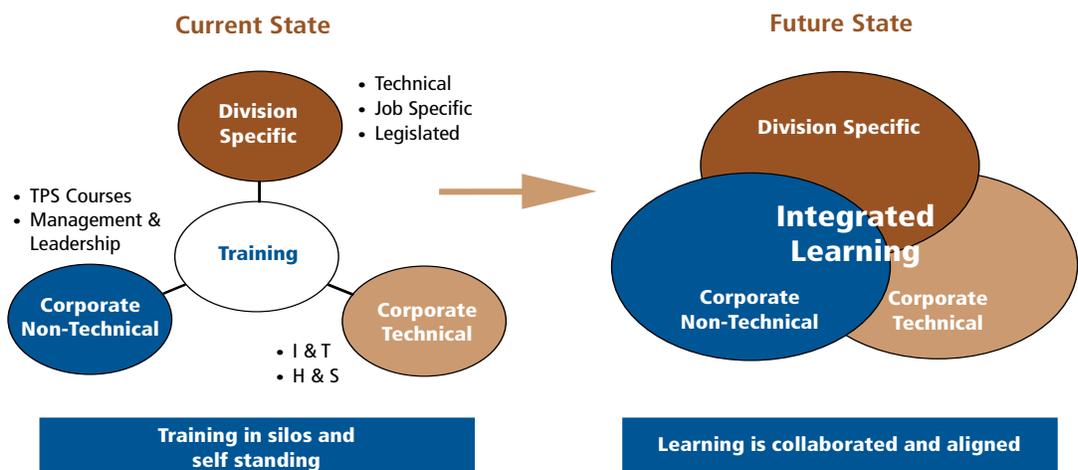
- The ingenuity, experience and innovation needed to serve a great city reside in all employees of the City
- To attract and retain the best talent we must provide career paths, training to succeed in current jobs, and opportunities to develop for future jobs
- Employee development is imperative - not an option but an operational priority
- A learning culture is outward looking and continuously seeks out and learns from best practices
- Training and learning are central to efficient and effective service delivery and a safe work environment.
- Development should be competency based and aligned to business and service priorities

Shifting the culture requires an understanding of what we need to leave behind and what we aspire towards:

Table 2

	Current State	Future State
Funding Model	Budget driven, sporadic funding	Aligned with service delivery and priority driven; dedicated funding
Management's Approach to Learning	Unarticulated plan, fragmented, silo approach; training as an event	Planned, coordinated, collaborative and corporately aligned and business/service driven
Learning Methods	Learning is traditional and predominately associated with instructor-led classroom sessions	Learning happens everywhere: e-learning, classroom/ e-learning combo, peer learning, supervisor-led tail-gate sessions, on-the-job, action learning and coaching etc.
Access and Support	Limited internal capacity and accessibility; limited support for external learning	Greater internal capacity and accessibility; encouragement and support for external learning opportunities
Learning Systems	Efficiency and effectiveness not tracked; no central data repository	Efficiency and effectiveness tracked; enterprise wide learning management system

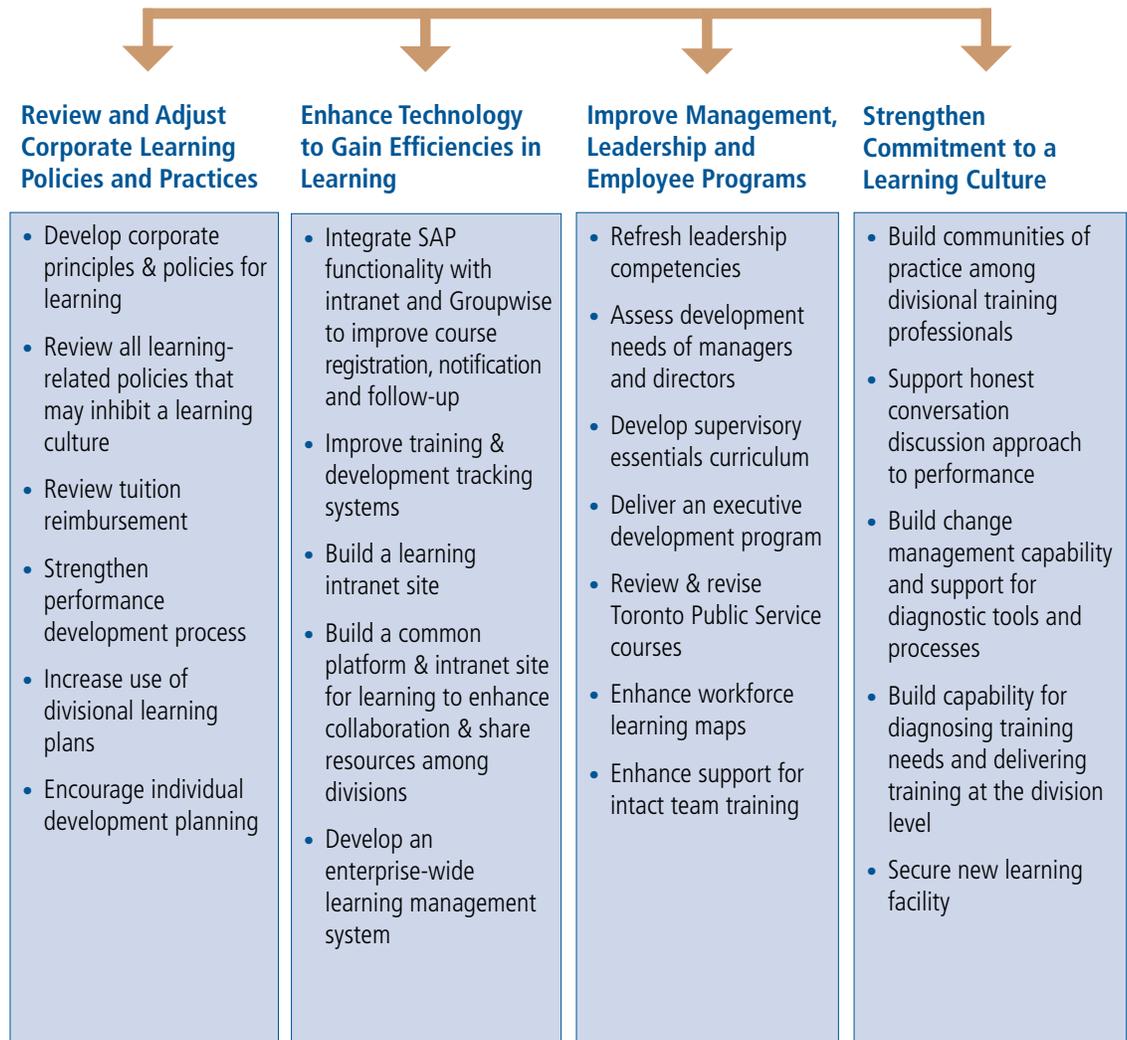
Longer Term Transition from Training to Integrated Learning



CORPORATE LEARNING STRATEGIES

Table 3 illustrates the four strategies used to advance the Learning Strategy. The Workforce Strategy Team's Learning Strategy Sub-Committee reviews the activities listed in each strategy.

Table 3



ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

In a flexible, adaptable workforce learning is a shared responsibility. Managers have a renewed opportunity to implement their responsibility for staff training and development, not as something that “gets in the way of the work”, but rather as an investment in productivity, innovation for future service improvement or a reduction in potential legislative liabilities. Staff also have a renewed opportunity to identify the skills they need to excel in their current job and to move forward along a clear career path.

Employees are responsible for:

- Learning and applying the skills and knowledge needed to do their job
- Identifying those skills needed for career progression and succession planning

Managers are responsible for:

- Identifying skills and knowledge gaps and supporting the employee in finding the most cost effective way to close those gaps

Divisions are responsible for:

- Identifying the role specific skills and knowledge required of their employees
- Preparing yearly training plans from learning needs identified to ensure programs are in line with changes in public needs, changing Council priorities or changing of divisional priorities
- Budgeting for programs to bridge skill gaps

Corporate responsibility:

- Identifying the common skills which apply to jobs across all divisions, for example:
 - legislated, mandated training (health and safety, human rights, values, ethics)
 - fundamental work skills (computer skills, service skills)
 - management skills
- Anticipating emerging corporate priority areas for training or development that require funding
- Creating a yearly learning plan in consultation with divisions and other stakeholders including the unions and COTAPSAI to forecast needs
- Creating cost effective strategies to meet Toronto Public Service-wide learning needs

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Mayor's Fiscal Review Panel's February 2008 Blueprint for Fiscal Stability and Economic Prosperity recommended that:

"The City should develop a strategy for systematic and comprehensive staff training and education, including more internal resources for on-the-job training and retraining, as well as joint training initiatives with City unions."

CORPORATE RESPONSE IN 2008:

Planning

- **Develop a yearly comprehensive and systematic learning plan starting in 2008**
The learning strategy will:
 - identify priorities for the coming year
 - be developed by the Human Resources Division with input from the Deputy City Managers, divisions and other stakeholders including the Learning Strategy Sub-committee of the Workforce Strategy Team, unions and COTAPSAI
 - be approved by the City Manager

Funding

In 2008 \$300,000 has been provided in a non-program account to support new courses in three areas.

Supervisors' essentials courses

Supervisors have a significant impact in the workplace. These courses will ensure that they have the knowledge and skills needed to model legislative and corporate standards:

- **Toronto Public Service Mission, Values and Ethics:** This course will ensure supervisors understand what is expected of them and gives them the skills to make ethical decisions.
- **Understanding and applying the Ontario Human Rights Code:** The City of Toronto and the Toronto Public Service are increasingly diverse. This course will ensure that supervisors understand their role under the Human Rights Code and City policies, including the Human Rights and Anti-Harassment Policy, for creating respectful workplaces.
- **Executive Development**
A corporate approach to management and executive succession management is

required to prepare for the anticipated retirements of managers. A new executive development program that will ensure that there is a strong and diverse pool of candidates ready to compete for division head positions has been developed.

- **Pilot new courses to meet emerging needs**

Unanticipated training and development needs often emerge that require funding for pilot courses, e.g. the 2007 Local 79/416 Equity Summit, joint management/union training on human rights or health and safety, etc. Some of the 2008 funds will be used to meet these needs.

FUNDING PRIORITIES 2009

Many training and development programs should be considered for increased investment. Priorities will be identified in consultation with division heads and other key stakeholders. The following points identify areas that should be considered for funding increases in 2009.

- **Increase support for joint management and labour training**

Increase investments in joint management and labour training. Topics include health and safety, human rights and labour relations. Joint training demonstrates our commitment to a productive and healthy workplace, strengthens respectful relationships and is consistent with the recommendations of the Mayor's Fiscal Review Panel in their February 2008 report.

- **Increase internal support for on the job training and divisional learning plans**

A systematic and comprehensive strategy requires resources to do needs assessments and increase capacity for divisional in-house training. As we increase investments in learning we must also increase our ability to provide the right training in the most cost effective way and to reduced reliance on outside training providers to deliver training. This recommendation addresses the Mayor's Fiscal Review Panel's recommendation to increase internal resources for training and retraining.

- **New Joint Management/Union Training Fund**

This would support training identified in collective agreements and support training that create a positive workplace, e.g. workplace health and safety, positive labour relations, fundamental work skills, etc.

- **Provide matching funds to divisions for intact team training**

When a whole work unit needs training on a specific course that is available through the Courses for the Toronto Public Service calendar they can pay for an intact team training session. Matching divisional contributions would encourage divisions to

support staff training opportunities within work locations.

- **Increase funds for corporate courses to eliminate wait lists**

Offering courses more frequently would eliminate wait lists.

- **Create a corporate retraining fund**

This fund would support divisions undergoing organizational changes, program reviews or changes in service delivery.

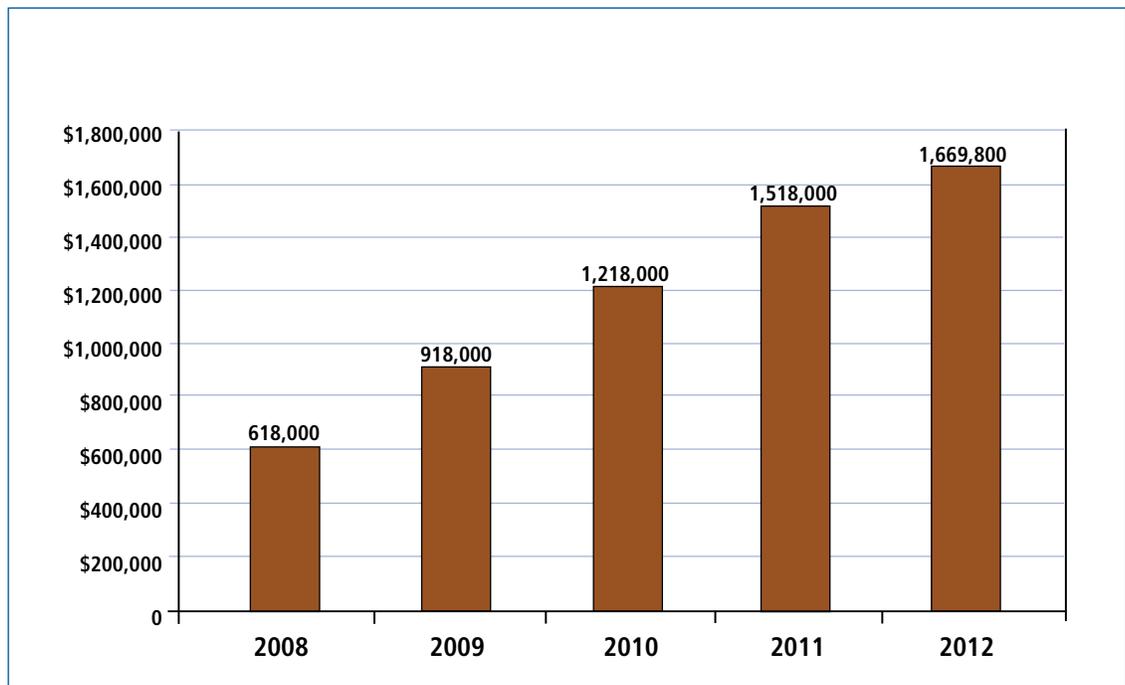
- **Fund electronic learning pilots**

Software technology that can deliver high quality, cost effective training is available in the marketplace. Funding to test software innovations in getting training to worksites rather than bringing people to central classrooms is needed.

STRATEGY FOR INCREASING FUNDING IN TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Commit to incrementally closing the gap between the Toronto Public Service training investment (\$513 per employee) and the Canadian average (\$852 per employee) by increasing our corporate investment in employee training and development by \$300,000 a year for 2009, 2010 and 2011 for a total of \$900,000 by 2011. After 2011 increase the corporate investment by 10 per cent per year. See chart below.
- This incremental approach will mean that by 2011 the total training investment per employee will have increased from \$513 to \$552. A comprehensive needs assessment being developed in the second half of 2008 may indicate that a more rapid increase is necessary to meet the needs of the Toronto Public Service and to close the gap with the Canadian training investment of \$852 per employee.

CORPORATE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM BUDGET 2008 - 2012



CONCLUSION

Investments in employee training and development encourage innovation, ensure the delivery of high quality service to the public and help attract and retain staff. The three elements required to achieve a systematic and comprehensive learning strategy for the Toronto Public Service have been outlined here.

The learning strategy requires an increased investment to meet real needs. Achieving success will require the involvement of all stakeholders - employees, managers, union locals and associations. Finally, it will require a shift from simply training people to do their current job to developing people for what will be needed in the future as jobs change and the needs of Toronto residents change.

